Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

~~Top Secret~~ 14

[redacted] 3.5(c)

[redacted]

Mco

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

~~Top Secret~~
125
30 January 1968

[redacted]

3.5(c)

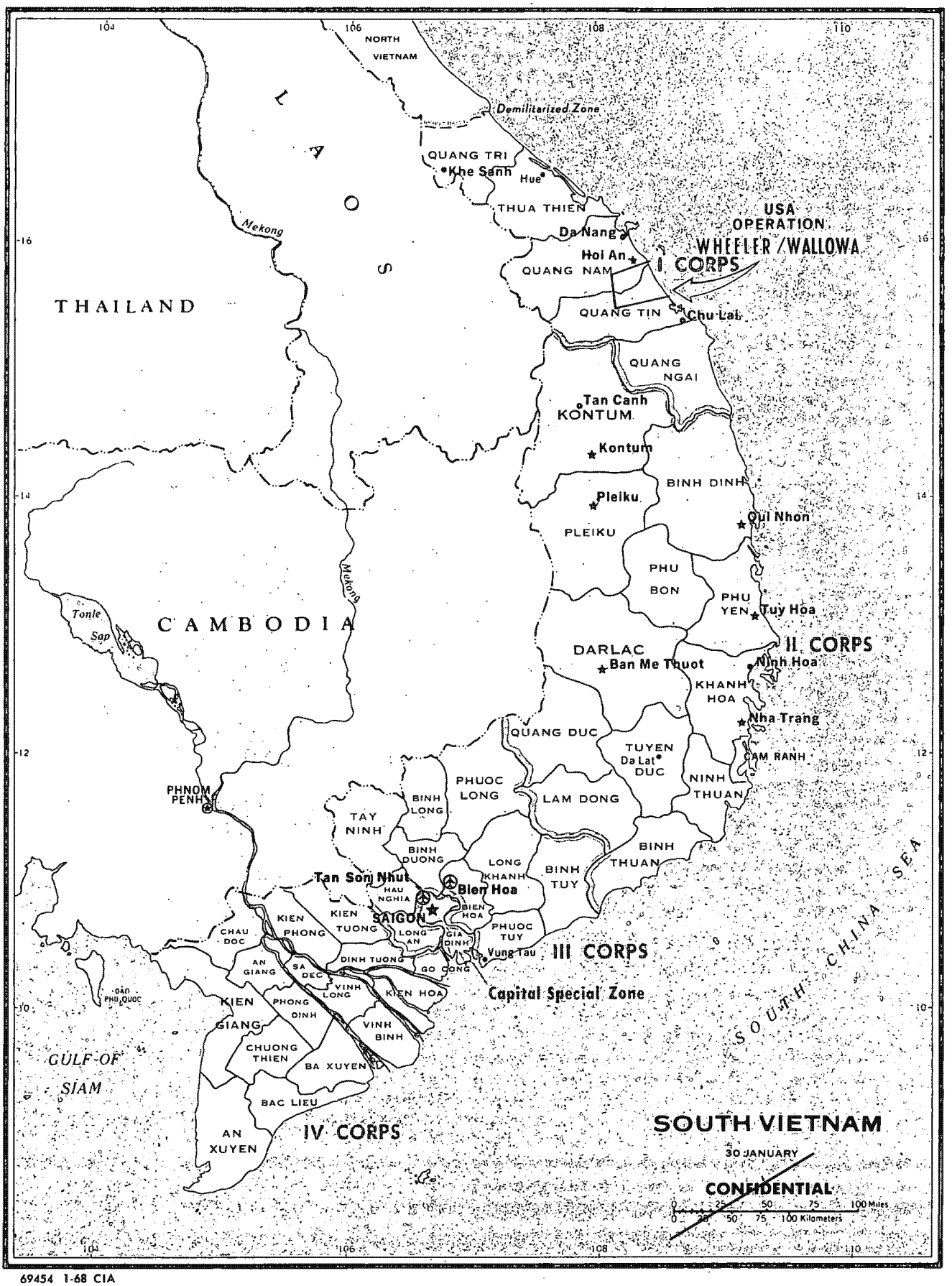
ARCHIVAL RECORD
PLEASE RETURN TO
AGENCY ARCHIVES, [redacted]

3.5(c)

227689

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740



69454 1-68 CIA

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

General

1. The Vietnamese Communists launched an unprecedented series of well-coordinated attacks against at least ten principal cities in South Vietnam's I and II Corps areas during 30-31 January (Saigon time). An offensive of such proportions, focused at least in its initial phase almost exclusively against targets in I and II Corps, [redacted] 3.3(h)(2)

2. On the night of 30-31 January the Saigon area was hit by a series of mortar and ground assaults. The US Embassy was subjected to mortar or rocket fire and there was small-arms fire outside the compound. Late reports indicate that firing around the embassy has abated. A report that the Viet Cong had penetrated the embassy and taken "control" was false. Terrorists reportedly did, however, enter the building and blew up the main reception desk. No casualties have been reported other than a Marine guard wounded. Military police have been sent to reinforce the compound.

3. According to various reports, shelling and small-arms fire has been occurring elsewhere in and around the capital. Both Tan Son Nhut Airfield serving Saigon and nearby Bien Hoa Air Base have come under mortar fire. There has been no report of damage or casualties. Unconfirmed press reports state that Saigon radio is off the air and that Viet Cong in South Vietnamese Army uniforms were attacking around the presidential palace.

30 January 1968

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

4. The situation in South Vietnam's two northernmost provinces, long anticipated as the focal points of any major enemy offensive, remains relatively quiet, although unconfirmed press reports indicate that North Vietnamese rocket fire may have temporarily closed the Khe Sanh airstrip early this morning.

The Coastal Provinces of I and II Corps

Da Nang Area

5. Enemy forces launched coordinated mortar, rocket and ground attacks in the Da Nang area on 30 January. Targets within the urban area included the air base, a strategic highway bridge, and the Vietnamese and US Army military headquarters. A small enemy force succeeded in penetrating the South Vietnamese I Corps headquarters compound. At about the same time as the mortar and ground attacks in the city, the enemy launched mortars at several other installations in the area, including the "Marble Mountain" air facility, a US Marine regiment northwest of the city, and Vietnamese forces guarding the strategic Hai Van Pass.

6. Allied forces apparently repulsed the thrusts in Da Nang city and have begun a house-to-house mopping-up operation. Fighting is, however, continuing in a hamlet within the city limits about a mile from the South Vietnamese Army corps headquarters. Civilian casualties are reported to be heavy as a result of the fighting and the strafing of sections of the city by South Vietnamese planes.

7. Preliminary reports indicate that four aircraft were destroyed and 21 damaged at Da Nang and 18 helicopters were damaged at "Marble Mountain." Da Nang Airfield was closed, but has reopened. About 3,000 feet of the Marble Mountain airstrip is nonoperational. Extensive damage was done to facilities at the base. Allied military casualties in the Da Nang area have been reported to be about 14 killed, and 31 wounded. There were 60 US nonbattle injuries. Thus far, enemy losses have been about 86 killed.

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

 3.5(c)

8. Around the same time as the Da Nang incidents enemy mortar barrages were directed into at least five aircraft landing zones throughout the area of Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA--astride the Quang Nam - Quang Tin province border--and in the area surrounding Chu Lai. Approximately 15 miles south of Da Nang, the Quang Nam provincial capital of Hoi An was attacked by an enemy force which first launched a diversionary attack on a Vietnamese artillery base.

9. An estimated 200-300 enemy troops seized a number of installations including the provincial hospital and overran a South Vietnamese engineer battalion compound where the enemy is entrenched.

3.3(h)(2)

10. Reports presently indicate that the situation is quiet in the Chu Lai and WHEELER/WALLOWA area.

3.3(h)(2)

Qui Nhon

11. An estimated Viet Cong sapper company penetrated the provincial capital of Binh Dinh and currently controls the radio station and an allied maintenance area. The US air base at Qui Nhon has also come under mortar attack.

3.3(h)(2)

Preliminary casualty reports show Communist losses of 50 killed and US losses of three killed and five wounded.

Nha Trang

12. Sporadic fighting continues in the provincial capital of Khanh Hoa, with allied reaction

 3.5(c)

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

forces attempting to cut off enemy units leaving the city. The action erupted early on 30 January when North Vietnamese Army elements, probably from the 5th Division, attacked and occupied provincial headquarters, military sector headquarters, a nearby special forces camp, the radio station, and the railroad station, in addition to storming the provincial jail. The Communists, estimated to range from two sapper companies to a full battalion, have thus far had 60 killed and 15 captured. Allied casualties were 21 killed and 66 wounded.

Tuy Hoa

13. Heavy fighting broke out in the provincial capital of Phy Yen. Allied reaction forces attempting to intercept probable elements of the North Vietnamese 5th Division fleeing the city, have killed 36 of the attackers while sustaining casualties of seven killed and 31 wounded.

Ninh Hoa

14. Additional elements of the North Vietnamese Army 5th Division have apparently launched attacks against allied installations in this important district town in coastal Khanh Hoa Province. Information on this sector is very sketchy, but 11 enemy have been reported killed.

The Western Highlands

15. In the western highlands, elements of the Communists' B-3 Front command in conjunction with Viet Cong local forces launched major attacks against the provincial capitals of Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac and against the base camp of a South Vietnamese regiment at Tan Canh in Kontum Province.

Kontum City

16. Elements of the US 4th Infantry Division have fought their way into Kontum city, reportedly dislodging

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

[redacted]

an estimated 500 to 1,000 Communists who had penetrated the provincial capital during the early morning hours of 30 January. The American counterattack has driven the two enemy battalions to positions on the northern outskirts of the city, where allied artillery and tactical air bombardment can be safely and effectively employed. Communist losses at Kontum thus far stand at 165 killed compared with allied casualties of nine killed and 50 wounded. The attacking force has been tentatively identified as three Viet Cong local force companies and one battalion of North Vietnamese regulars, probably from the 24th Regiment.

Pleiku City

17. Sporadic heavy fighting apparently continues in the Pleiku provincial capital, with multi-battalion South Vietnamese ranger and airborne reaction forces attempting to block enemy routes of escape from the area. The action began early on 30 January when 500 to 700 Communists followed up heavy rocket barrages against Pleiku Airfield and a nearby montagnard training center with an assault which penetrated the capital city itself. Battle results to date include 103 Communists killed compared with allied losses of seven killed and 22 wounded.

Ban Me Thuot

18. Fighting continues within the Darlac provincial capital. An estimated two Communist battalions are apparently poised on the outskirts of the city. An enemy captive has identified the attacking force as subordinate to the North Vietnamese Army 33rd Regiment and given the mission of "infiltrating and taking Ban Me Thuot." Enemy losses thus far include 91 killed and 28 captured. Allied casualties are seven killed and 16 wounded.

Tan Canh

19. Sporadic fighting continues between elements of a South Vietnamese regiment and an estimated

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Communist company which last night attacked and overran the village of Tan Canh. Two-thirds of the village was burned to the ground. The village is located 20 miles north of Kontum city near Dak To Special Forces camp and serves as the base camp of South Vietnam's 42nd Regiment. No significant results of this engagement are yet available.

Probable Impact of Enemy Actions

20. The effect these actions will have on the morale of the civilian population residing in and around the besieged cities of I and II Corps will be difficult to measure; however, they probably represent a serious setback in allied efforts to secure and pacify these areas and could further shake civilian confidence in the new government.

30 January 1968

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

3.3(h)(2)
Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Page Denied

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

[redacted]

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

30 January 1968

[redacted] 3.5(c)

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. In a series of broadcasts on 30 January, the Vietnamese Communists condemned the allies for violating the Tet truce and concluded by announcing that Communist forces had launched many simultaneous attacks in northern and central South Vietnam. One broadcast said the attacks were aimed at developing the winter-spring campaign and "punishing" the US for violating the Communist "order" for a cessation of military attacks.

2. Earlier broadcasts denouncing the modification of the allied cease-fire were clearly aimed at laying the groundwork for claiming that the intensive Communist military activity launched on Tet was a reaction to allied cease-fire violations. Both Hanoi and Liberation Front broadcasts stressed that the US and its "henchmen" had violated the customs and "legitimate aspirations" of the Vietnamese people which the Communists had "recognized" in promulgating their seven-day cease-fire proposal.

3. The Liberation Front's effort to improve its diplomatic representation abroad has taken another step forward. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere announced on 29 January that his government has agreed to allow the Front to set up permanent representation in Dar es Salaam. When staffed, this post will be the first Front representation in sub-Saharan Africa, the third on that continent, and the fifth in the free world. The Front also has representations or agreements for such missions in all of the Communist countries except Yugoslavia.

30 January 1968

Approved for Release: 2018/07/26 C06753740